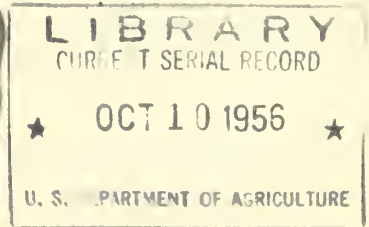


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How Women Help Their Farmer Co-ops,

by Oscar R. LeBeau
and John H. Heckman

FCS Circular 15
June 1956

Farmer Cooperative Service,
U. S. Department of Agriculture



THE Farmer Cooperative Service conducts research studies and service activities for farmers in connection with cooperatives engaged in marketing farm products, purchasing farm supplies, and supplying business services. The work of the Service relates to problems of management, organization, policies, merchandising, product quality, costs, efficiency, financing, and membership.

The Service publishes the results of such studies; confers and advises with officials of farmer cooperatives; and works with educational agencies, cooperatives, and others in the dissemination of information relating to cooperative principles and practices.

JOSEPH G. KNAPP
Administrator,
Farmer Cooperative Service
U. S. Department of Agriculture

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HIGHLIGHTS

WOMEN have traditionally played an important role in the success of the home farm. This family interest rightly extends to the portion of the farm business handled through their cooperatives.

This circular describes how farm women can contribute to the success of the co-ops to which their families belong.

The activities discussed are not merely ideas; they have already been found practical by cooperative leaders. A number of them are practiced rather extensively; others less frequently.

Starting on the farm, women can help in evaluating farm and family needs, making business contacts, keeping their family informed, and training their young people.

Working within their cooperatives, women can help build and maintain favorable membership relations by serving on councils and committees, taking part in meetings and conferences, aiding with cooperative house-keeping, maintaining member inter-

est, helping with the membership publication, improving the marketing of farm products, and assisting with legislation.

As citizens of their respective communities, women can help to build good public relations by promoting rural-urban conferences, conducting tours and field day programs, sponsoring essay and public speaking contests, presenting radio and television programs, and preparing educational exhibits.

The second part of this circular describes the women's program of 5 selected cooperatives. These cooperatives are the Dairymen's League Cooperative Association, New York City, N. Y.; Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association, Inc., Indianapolis; Pacific Supply Cooperative, Walla Walla, Wash.; Southern States Cooperative, Richmond, Va.; and Utah Poultry and Farmers Association, Salt Lake City. These programs illustrate how cooperatives can develop women's activities adapted to the particular needs of their organization.

How Women Help Their Farmer Co-ops

by Oscar R. LeBeau and John H. Heckman

Membership Relations Branch
Management Services Division

AGRICULTURAL cooperative leaders the country over are becoming increasingly aware of the important contributions women can and do make to farmer cooperatives. Alert managers and directors are seeking, therefore, new ideas for tapping this important source of membership help. Participation by members' wives can be beneficial, both to the cooperative and to the participants, if properly directed and encouraged.

In response to the interest manifested in this type of membership activity, Farmer Cooperative Service made a

study of the subject. This indicated that a number of cooperatives have developed outstanding programs for women. Many others are doing a good job along one or more lines. When all of these ideas are brought together, they comprise many valuable suggestions for improving member and public relations in farmer cooperatives.

This circular first takes a composite look at how women can and are contributing to cooperatives. Then it describes in more detail the programs of five selected cooperatives.

Part I—How Women Can Help Farmer Cooperatives

THE part women take in making cooperatives more effective is simply an extension of their normal farm and home activities. For farming is a family-centered enterprise. Almost more than any other vocation, farming is a

partnership undertaking for husband and wife and parents and children.¹

Farm women devote much time and energy to making the home farm a business success. They know that an adequate farm income is essential to

NOTE.—The authors wish to express their appreciation to the many farmer cooperative and educational leaders who contributed basic information and illustrative material for this publication. They are particularly indebted to Mrs. Genevieve Judy, Mrs. Viola Armstrong, Mrs. Helen King, Mrs. Sarah Porter Ellis, and Mrs. Edna Ohlweiler, of the various cooperatives, for the information contained in the respective programs outlined in part II.

They are grateful also to J. Kenneth Stern and Howard McClarren of the American

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¹ For a companion circular on rural youth, see FCS Circular 1, "Cooperative Business Training for Farm Youth," by Oscar R. LeBeau and John H. Heckman, U. S. Farmer Cooperative Service.

their families' well-being. They know that the more favorable the income the more likely they can have the farm and home improvements they want. They realize that the educational and social opportunities available to their children depend in a large measure on the family income.

To make the business of farming pay better, many farm families have come to rely on farmer cooperatives to assist them with their marketing, purchasing, and other business needs.

The logical unit of membership in these associations is the family—the operator, his wife, and their children. While the voting rights in these associations are usually vested in the head of the household, each member of the

family has a stake in the business. Thus, they all have an obligation to contribute to the cooperative's success.

The advent of electricity, automatic heat, and the many other household labor saving devices have helped release more of the homemaker's time for community activities. This has opened the way for farm women to take a larger part in the cooperatives to which their families belong.

This first part of the circular will discuss the ways women are helping their cooperatives. For convenience, their contributions have been grouped under three general activity headings—farm and home, membership, and public relations.

Planning for Farm and Home

COOPERATIVE leaders are finding women particularly helpful in matters relating to their individual farms and homes. To better understand the

extent to which this is true, let us examine a few of the contributions women make regularly to their cooperative.



Pointing out farm and home needs to their cooperatives is an activity women can handle well. Because women buy 70 percent of its chicken feed, Pacific Supply Cooperative, Walla Walla, Wash., began selling the feed in 50-pound sacks instead of 100.

Evaluating Farm and Family Needs

Women Can Help keep efforts of their cooperatives directed toward current farm and home needs.

For cooperatives to be successful, their leaders must know about the products and services their members desire. Since farm women's daily activities keep them constantly aware of farm and home needs, their point of view is vital.

Cooperatives have an obligation within the limits of good business practices to adapt their services to their members' needs.

For instance, the farm may need a new tractor, fertilizer to improve the land's output, additional insurance, and various home improvements such as a refrigerator. The wife will enter into the discussion of these needs in helping work out the family budget.

Women also often pick up ideas for improved farming operations from their telephone contacts, from reading, from meetings, and from advertising programs on radio and television that they can discuss with their husbands to see if applicable to their own operations.

Making Business Contacts

Women Can Help make many of the family's business contacts.

Farm women do a great deal of the family buying and selling. Thus, they are often in a good position to know what new products are available and the comparative costs of various items. Through their shopping, they make many of the contacts necessary in conducting the business of the farm.

Farmers' wives are often first to see the incoming mail. Their preliminary sorting may be a large factor in how much attention it receives.

During much of the day most women are closer to the telephone, the radio, and television than are their husbands. Thus, educational, advertising and other programs are more likely to reach farm women than men.

Modern-day farming has become a complex business. Larger operating units and increased investments in land, buildings, livestock equipment, and labor require a large outlay for equipment and operating expenses. Before the farm family can determine the amount of its income and know where it stands financially, a careful analysis of all receipts and expenses is essential.

Annual tax reports, social security payments, deferred patronage refunds, and other business requirements make it imperative that farmers keep accurate records. Many of these transactions will consist of business done with their farmer cooperatives.

Many farmers depend on their wives to help them with their farm bookkeeping and accounting. Often they set up joint bank accounts, with the wives paying family bills.

A number of cooperatives are supplying their patrons with convenient milk production records, egg records, and other practical bookkeeping aids. Since women frequently take charge of milk and egg business on the farm, these goodwill items have a particular appeal to farm wives. They also simplify recordkeeping and make it easier to summarize business activities at the end of the year.

Keeping Family Informed

Women Can Help glean cooperative information of interest to their families.

The average farmer has limited time to read, particularly during the busy seasons of the year. And generally, farm women read more of the newspapers, farm magazines, and other literature than their husbands. Thus, if cooperative information is to get across to farm families, it is important to aim a portion of it toward the feminine side of the family.

A number of cooperatives are including women's pages in their regular membership publications. More of them may need to aim some of their literature and publicity toward the



Children can pick up a lot of information about cooperatives through their parents, particularly their mothers. These youngsters give out with glad song at the annual meeting of the Dairymen's League Cooperative Association of New York.

women. More farm women need to be able to discuss cooperative matters

freely and intelligently. Since they enter into many of the business decisions, they need to have a sound basis on which to make them.

Training Young People

Women Can Help develop a favorable family attitude toward farmer cooperatives.

Farm women can render invaluable service to their cooperatives by taking a favorable attitude toward them within the family circle. They have a major influence on knowledge, understanding and attitude of their children toward these associations.

Children watching their parents buying and selling through their local cooperatives learn many practical lessons that will be remembered later.

Farm women can also help by encouraging their children to participate in cooperative meetings, essay contests, and quizzes. They can help make it possible for their children to attend picnics, recreational camps, and talent roundups conducted by their cooperatives.

Improving Membership Relations

COOPERATIVE leaders are finding that women can contribute greatly to cooperative development by participating more actively as members or as members' wives.

For cooperatives to be successful over the long pull, a high degree of membership loyalty and participation is essential. The activities outlined below illustrate the many contributions farm women are making and can make to help improve membership relations in the cooperatives to which their families belong.

Serving on Councils and Committees

Women Can Help by serving effectively on advisory councils and special committees.

Most often these are year-round advisory, annual meeting, luncheon and hospitality committees, or other task forces.

Committees made up of husband-and-wife teams have provided practical approaches to many association problems. Such committees are more likely to take the total farm-and-home view in approaching their work. Usually, they meet at the home of one of the members, or at some central point. Generally they mix in some food, sociability and fun with their assignment.

Several of the larger cooperatives have made profitable use of farm home advisory committees made up of members' wives. Among these are Southern States Cooperative, Richmond, Va., and the Pacific Supply Cooperative, Walla Walla, Wash. Their ad-

visory programs are described in greater detail in a later section of this circular. (See pp. 30 and 34.)

Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, Columbus, in cooperation with the Ohio Farm Bureau Cooperative Association, Columbus, has developed a statewide network of neighborhood advisory councils, each consisting of about 10 to 20 couples. These councils meet monthly in their respective homes to discuss topics of timely interest to farmers. Some of the meetings discuss farmer cooperatives. The parent organization supplies them with a monthly leaflet to guide their discussions. Reports of the meetings and the conclusions reached are forwarded to the Farm Bureau office at Columbus for summarizing.

Production credit associations have appealed to women's interests in vari-



A neighborhood advisory council meets in Clinton County, Ohio, to discuss items of interest to farmers, under the guidance of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, Columbus.

ous ways to promote their programs. PCA advisory committees have been set up in most counties to advise PCA directors on credit problems. These advisory committees meet regularly in committeemen's homes and other places. In numerous instances the wives also attend. This gives the women an opportunity to become acquainted with agricultural credit problems and services of their committees.

Taking Part in Meetings and Conferences

Women Can Help conduct interesting cooperative meetings.

Successful membership meetings are an essential feature of every well-run farmer association. To hold a good annual meeting should be one of the top objectives of every manager and director. In addition, many cooperatives are finding it helpful to hold one or more educational meetings each year.

Good cooperative meetings must be carefully planned in advance—to the minutest detail. This is another task to which husband-and-wife teams can make notable committee contributions.

At the most successful annual meetings, women take part in such activities as transportation, registration, housing, hospitality, entertainment, and serving the annual luncheon. Many cooperatives have seen how much smoother these details are handled by a responsible committee including women.

Moreover, when women participate in planning the program, it is more likely to include educational and entertainment items of interest to women and youth. Women can often help recruit talent that provides variety and human interest.

A number of cooperatives have been unusually successful in presenting home talent shows as the entertainment feature of their annual meetings. Among these are Southern States Cooperative and Dairymen's League Cooperative Association, New York City.

Many women have special talents of their own. Some participate in the show as well as help plan it. Well-publicized, this type of entertainment helps draw a good crowd at the annual meeting.

As an illustration of how a particular type of cooperative can benefit by having the help and attendance of women, let us note the experiences of a few of the credit cooperatives.

Family Attendance Benefits Credit Co-ops

Many national farm loan associations (NFLA's) and production credit associations (PCA's) have found that attendance at annual meetings is best when the entire family takes part. The most successful PCA's and NFLA's make it a point to invite women and children.

Recently the Land Bank Service of the Farm Credit Administration made a study of factors that contributed to obtaining good attendance at NFLA meetings. Foremost among its findings were two activities that involved women's participation. The first was a good meal graciously served; the second was a reasonable amount of appropriate entertainment.

Women are sometimes given a place on the program to tell how their families have benefited from cooperative credit. In numerous instances the women contribute local entertainment to provide a varied program.

A number of associations have adopted the practice of awarding door prizes to encourage full attendance at their annual meetings. Choosing prizes that appeal to the entire family

has proved a helpful means of obtaining increased attendance.

Production credit associations with successful attendance records attribute this to at least two factors: First, every phase of the annual meeting is carefully planned many months in advance. Secondly, the program has been designed to include activities of interest to men, women, and children.

In the case of the El Campo (Tex.) Production Credit Association, for example, it is not uncommon for more than 200 men and women to have a part in planning and putting on its annual meeting program. An important feature of each meeting has been a special program for the women. A committee of advisory committeemen's wives has been in charge of this program, with the assistance of the county home agent and the women employees of the association.

Movies and other activities are provided for the children. This has freed additional mothers to attend the meeting. A popular barbecue luncheon has come to be one of the highlights of the year.

Wives Attend Conferences

Wives frequently accompany their husbands to educational conferences and conventions. A substantial number of cooperatives are encouraging their managers, directors, and member representatives to bring their wives.

Not only can the regular programs for these occasions be planned to include items of value to the women but often supplementary events can be arranged for their entertainment. This is likely to occur if the women have a hand in the program planning.

For example, the National Milk Producers Federation, Washington, D. C., has for more than a decade sponsored an annual women's luncheon at the time of its annual convention. In addition to the good fellowship and fun offered by the luncheon, usually an inspirational talk is featured. Additional highlights may be a style show, a sightseeing tour of the host city, and other special features.



Women assist with registration services at the annual meeting of the Columbus (Nebr.) Production Credit Association.



As part of its annual meeting, Wisconsin Council of Agriculture Cooperative, Madison, features a farm family dinner, with only women sitting at the head table. A woman guides the program at the dinner.

The American Institute of Cooperation at its annual summer session likewise provides a program of interest to women. For instance, at Purdue University in August 1955, the Institute staged a very successful luncheon, as well as a tea for its women guests.

Since 1940, the Wisconsin Council of Agriculture Cooperative has held an annual farm family dinner regularly as a part of its annual meeting program. These dinner meetings have emphasized the importance of the family approach to farm business and to cooperative endeavor. Both men and women attend. A woman is the master of ceremonies and only women are seated at the head table.

Setting Up Good Co-op House-keeping

Women Can Help to improve the physical appearance and house-keeping features of their cooperatives. They are usually eager to help if given adequate leeway and encouragement through appropriate committee assignments. Certainly, many farmer cooperatives could benefit from improved housekeeping.

First, there is the outside appearance. Women can help determine if the premises are attractive and in a good state of repair. They would want the building located in a part of the town where women and children would want to go. They can make sure the business is properly marked or designated so that it can be found without a special guide. They can help decide if the grounds are attractively landscaped; if the warehouse has good loading facilities; and if there are adequate parking facilities nearby.

Then, there is the inside of the building. Working through appointed committees, women can check to see that the office and sales space has been efficiently arranged. They are interested in cleanliness, too, with walls and floors in good condition and the windows clean. They can make suggestions for displaying merchandise in an orderly, attractive manner. They can help make sure that cloak and restroom facilities are adequate. In other words, they can help make their cooperative a neater and more convenient agency.

These items go a long way toward determining how members feel about their cooperative.

Maintaining Member Interest

Women Can Help

maintain member interest by effective contacts with present and prospective members, helping with educational demonstrations and contests, and providing recreational activities.

Membership Contacts

Personal contacts rank high in any membership program. Proper communication between management and members, and vice versa, is of utmost importance. Adequate communications and good membership understanding go hand-in-hand.

Women are effective communicators. They talk to a lot of people. They belong to a great many organizations. Most of them are within easy reach of a telephone throughout the day. They give and receive a great number of messages.

Husband-and-Wife Teams

A number of cooperatives have made effective use of husband - and - wife teams in rounding up new members or in re-enrolling previous members.

Southern States Cooperative, for example, has had encouraging results from a Booster contest in which free trips were offered to any member, member's wife, or family youth 18 years of age or older for the largest

volume of new business brought in during a specified period.

One of the specific assignments given to the Home Service leaders of the Dairymen's League Cooperative Association is that of extending a welcome to the family of each new member in their area.

All these contacts, and many more, are indicative of the opportunities that women have to make new friends and keep old friends for the associations to which their families belong.

Demonstrations and Contests

Women Can Help

conduct various educational demonstrations and contests of interest to cooperative members.

The demonstration method has long been an effective educational device. A number of cooperatives have used this technique successfully in acquainting potential patrons with their products and services.

Various marketing cooperatives, for example, have utilized product promotion demonstrations with encouraging success. Any successful cooking, baking, freezing, or canning demonstration—utilizing milk, eggs, meats, fruits, and other farm products—paves the way for expanded consumption of such items.

Product promotion demonstrations



By giving demonstrations such as this one on "Glow" candles at fairs and co-op gatherings and using co-op labeled products, these representatives of Consumers Cooperative Association, Kansas City, Mo., build up demand for its supplies.



Choral group of Gold Spot Dairy, Inc., Enid, Okla., ready to entertain a co-op audience.

are equally practical for farm supply cooperatives.

One large regional cooperative, for instance, presents at least one such demonstration at each of its 64 regional training meetings for its committee women. One time it may be a baking demonstration using the cooperative's flour. The next time it may be a wall painting demonstration using new decoramic paint. And so on through a dozen or more commodities and services.

Similarly, several major cooperatives—such as the Consumers Cooperative Association, Kansas City, Mo., and Pacific Supply Cooperative, Walla Walla, Wash.—have had encouraging success in sponsoring candlemaking demonstrations. By illustrating the making of "Glow candles" to various women's groups, much enthusiasm has been kindled for ornamental candlemaking. This in turn has created a lively demand for wax, a byproduct of the petroleum refining process.

The interest in candlemaking has led many housewives to go in to the local cooperative store for supplies. Once acquainted, they often become regular patrons.

Educational contests or quizzes offer another good avenue for women to participate in cooperative affairs.

A number of wide-awake associations have made good use of educa-

tional quizzes at annual meeting time and other appropriate occasions. This has enabled these cooperatives to put across certain basic cooperative facts to men, women, and young people of the community.

Widely publicized, these educational contests help to get out the entire family to the annual meeting.

One large regional farm supply cooperative has successfully employed a simulated "basketball tournament" at its local annual meetings. Five women matched their wits against five men in answering questions about their association. The highest scoring teams then competed with teams from other areas until the top winners were determined at the annual stockholders meeting.

Skillfully handled, these educational quizzes afford a good means of building up favorable community interest. With appropriate modifications, many of the same questions can be used in the public schools, at farm organization meetings, and on other public occasions.

Recreational Activities

Women Can Help

conduct enjoyable recreational activities for farmer cooperative members.

Well-planned recreation helps maintain the interest of the group. The sociability that goes with successful

picnics, talent shows, choral singing and educational trips helps to build a closer relationship among the members. All provide a wide opportunity for women to contribute.

Picnics provide an unusual opportunity for all-family planning and participation. They are excellent means of building good fellowship among members.

A number of cooperatives are sponsoring choral groups composed of members and employees. Their choral activity affords constructive recreation and helps to keep the cooperatives in the public's eye.

Farmers and their wives enjoy sightseeing tours. Frequently, these tours can be arranged to include cooperative processing plants, warehouses, and other physical facilities. Women often help plan the details of such trips. Sometimes more extensive tours can be taken to neighboring counties and States.

Helping With the Membership Publication

Women Can Help report news of interest to cooperative members, and help keep the membership publication mailing list up to date.

Reporting Local Events

A number of cooperatives have made effective use of women as local reporters for their association. Managers welcome this type of assistance as it enables the association to get news coverage without its taking much of the manager's time.

Among cooperatives that have made a special project of using women as reporters is the Pacific Supply Cooperative. It has delegated one or more women in each of its patronage areas to serve as news reporter. They cover such items as local annual meetings, special home demonstrations, and other local events. These news reports are sent to the cooperative's publication and to local editors. (For further details, see p. 28.)

Other cooperatives, such as the Dairywomen's League Cooperative As-



By encouraging wives to sign up for their co-op's house organ, Pacific Cooperative Women help keep cooperative information going out to farm families who can benefit most from it.

sociation's local units, sometimes name interested farm women to serve as news reporters for their local activities.

Much of this news reporting is on a gratis basis the same as any other committee work. However, at least one co-op and some local newspapers compensate their regular reporters on a column-inch basis for dependable news. This provides a financial incentive.

A number of cooperatives maintain a special women's page in their house organ. This is devoted to items of interest to homemakers. Several make it a practice to publicize recipes and other household suggestions contributed by readers.

Maintaining Membership Lists

Closely related to news gathering is the activity of helping the local manager maintain an up-to-date mailing list of active patrons and members. This is not an easy task as any manager will testify. With the younger families moving in and out of farming and with many of the older farmers retiring or dropping out, no patron list stays up to date long.

This poses the problem of getting the cooperative's membership publication delivered without undue waste. Each family can help by reporting its own changes of address and those of any acquaintances.

In the case of the Pacific Supply Cooperative, the women have helped obtain subscriptions for the cooperative house organ through farm-to-farm visits. This has qualified the house organ for lower postage rates. At the same time, it has afforded the women an opportunity to make individual farm visits and improve member relations.

Improving Marketing of Farm Products

Women Can Help emphasize proper grading, packaging and handling of farm products.

Quality and attractiveness of products offered for market have a direct bearing on consumer acceptance. Buyer satisfaction is an important factor in determining prices. This is particularly true of such commodities as eggs, milk, and wool.

The women of the Utah Farmers and Poultry Cooperative, Salt Lake City, have been especially instrumental in

obtaining improved handling of eggs on the farm.

Through an educational program designed to reach all farm families in the area, the women of the association have been able to improve the shelf life of the eggs. (For further details, see p. 42.)

Many dairy cooperatives have been able to obtain improved sanitation and cooling of milk on the farms en route to market. Dairymen's League, for example, has given great emphasis to producing high quality milk. Often this has been accomplished through efforts of its Home Service organization. Similarly, by giving emphasis to the importance of milk in the daily diet, the women have helped to increase the consumption of milk and milk products among their friends and neighbors.

In the case of wool, the Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association, Indianapolis, has been conducting an educational program among the women to emphasize the importance of producing and marketing clean wool. By selling the wool through a wool marketing cooperative, more favorable prices have been obtained.



Members of this group are studying legislative actions at one of the monthly discussion gatherings of the Ohio Farm Bureau Cooperative Association, Inc., Columbus.

Assisting With Legislation

Women Can Help

support Federal and State legislation of interest to farmer cooperatives.

Farmer cooperatives are finding it important to have grassroot support for their legislative programs. Farm women can lend a lot of help to their legislative efforts. Sometimes this means working in support of certain legislative proposals. At other times, legislation unfriendly to farmers must be vigorously opposed.

Dairymen's League has had a legislative committee for many years. This committee consists of a woman representative from each of its administrative districts. These women move into action whenever an important piece of legislation is pending. Acting

on the advice of the League's management, they communicate with the legislators of their respective districts. This gives them an avenue of expression that has proven effective on many occasions. (For further details, see p. 19.)

In Ohio, the legislative efforts have been focused chiefly on the Farm Home Advisory Councils sponsored by the Ohio Farm Bureau Cooperative Association. Discussion guides are furnished for each monthly gathering. Generally, there will be two or more meetings each year at which topics of legislative interest are discussed pro and con. Usually, at least half of the attendance consists of members' wives. Thus, women's views are well represented in the recommendations that develop out of these discussions.

Building Good Public Relations

FARMER cooperatives like other businesses are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of good public relations.

The preceding section suggested various ways in which women can help to achieve better membership understanding and participation. Many of the same ideas and activities have proved effective in building favorable relations with the public in general.

In addition, women can contribute in numerous other ways in developing good public relations. Some of these are discussed below.

Promoting Rural-Urban Understanding

Women Can Help

foster better rural-urban understanding within their communities.

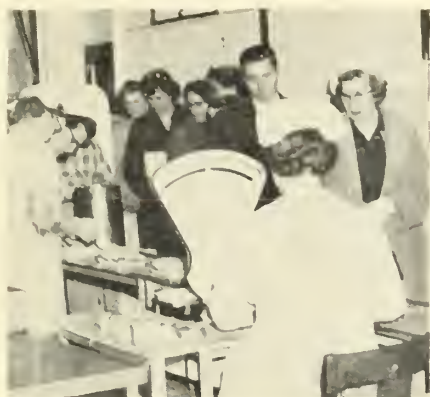
An important aspect of any farmer cooperative's public relations program should be that of gaining better understanding of farmers' problems by city people and vice versa. The more urban consumers understand about farmers' problems the more likely they are

to favor the self-help activities of farmer cooperatives.

The farm and city discussion groups sponsored by cooperatives in a number of States in recent years offer an excellent approach. They give an opportunity for persons with varying occupational backgrounds to exchange views and ideas. They lead folks to have a more sympathetic understanding of the other fellow's lot and circumstances. They help to point up the interdependency of farmers, merchants, bankers, and other occupational groups.

Among the cooperatives that have achieved excellent results in this field is the Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association. This group has for several years emphasized rural-urban relations in its series of 10 discussion educational meetings. These conferences are held semiannually and are designed to be of special interest to the women attending.

Another outstanding example is that provided by the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation in its series of monthly discussion leaflets for the guidance of its



At Washington Cooperative Farmers Association, Seattle, urban and farm women learn how the co-op processes chicken. Farm Bureau women of Whatcom County serve as hostesses.

1,500 neighborhood advisory groups. Several of these discussion outlines have dealt with rural-urban relations. Summary statements from these meetings testify to their worthwhileness.

Conducting Tours and Field Days

Women Can Help

conduct co-op tours and field-day programs.

An increasing number of cooperatives are improving their public relations through carefully planned tours and special field-day programs for members and invited guests. Educational tours have become an important device for developing goodwill and understanding between urban consumers and agricultural producers.

In cooperation with the Washington Cooperative Farmers Association, Seattle, the Farm Bureau women of Whatcom County in Washington served as hostesses to a group of city wives and leaders who visited this local poultry processing plant in their community. The guests had an opportunity to observe how the poultry was processed and packaged for market. Also, they had a chance to hear how a marketing cooperative operates and to learn about the problems and costs of poultry production. During the course of the tour, they were served a free luncheon by the cooperative. This type of public relations ac-

tivity has made many new friends for farmers.

Ohio Cooperative Council sponsored a series of field day programs in 1953 in cooperation with local businesses and county extension personnel. These field day activities were conducted on a key farm in the community. The leading characters in the pageant were the farmer, his family, and various cooperative managers. Many of the details regarding refreshments, rehearsals, and the like, were handled by local committees on which women participated.

These field day programs were conducted primarily for the benefit of selected vocational agriculture students and 4-H Club members in the area. The activities showed these young people how various farmer cooperatives in the area serve the farm family. The young folks came away with a much better understanding of how cooperatives serve the individual farm business and the community. An important byproduct of this venture was the improved understanding and goodwill which developed among the participating business firms.

Sponsoring Essay and Public Speaking Contests

Women Can Help

their cooperatives in sponsoring essay and public speaking contests related to farm problems.

Contests of this type have been used with satisfying results in many places. Both Future Farmers of America chapters and the 4-H Club organizations have participated actively in projects of this type.

Usually, the essays and speeches are conducted as two phases of the same project. Sometimes a State or regional committee chooses the subject for the essay or speech. In other instances, the contestants get a list of 4 or 5 topics from which to choose.

Properly motivated, these contests are of interest to girls as well as boys, and to women as well as men. In fact, the task of working out the details of these contests is one in which

women can have a very significant part.

Benefits of these contests frequently reach to city audiences. By the time that they reach the State or final eliminations, some excellent essays and orations have evolved.

Presenting Radio and Television Programs

Women Can Help present radio and television programs. Radio and television are among the media useful in developing favorable public relations. Various cooperatives have worked with farm radio editors to present news and views of farm people. A number of the larger cooperatives have set up advertising budgets which provide for the use of regular radio and television time. These funds are generally used for product promotion or for the general improvement of public relations.

With careful planning and with proper collaboration with local station directors, more frequent and sustained use can be made of radio and television by farmer cooperatives. Most of the broadcasting stations maintained in connection with our land-grant colleges, for example, are glad to receive program suggestions from farm leaders. Often these can be family-type programs beamed to carry messages



With the television eye upon her, a member of Pacific Cooperative Women in Portland, Oreg., shows how to make co-op "Glow" candles.

of interest to both urban and rural listeners.

Women from several cooperatives have appeared on various radio and television shows, giving demonstrations or participating in interviews.

One successful southern cooperative has for several years sponsored a home talent show as the recreational feature of its annual meeting. The participants included men, women, and children. This evening's show had a well-known television artist as master of ceremonies. The top winners were subsequently featured on a metropolitan television talent show. Naturally, this provided considerable publicity to the sponsoring cooperative.

Preparing Educational Exhibits

Women Can Help prepare educational exhibits on farmer cooperation.

Rural fairs have long been popular events in agricultural areas. Farm women have helped their cooperatives prepare interesting exhibits for these occasions in some areas. They have also encouraged their children to participate.

Educational exhibits provide an opportunity to present selected information to specific audiences. Most folks grasp an idea much more quickly when it is presented visually. Many people will look at an attractive display who would never read a circular or other printed material.

Such displays can be prepared for agricultural fairs, farmers' institutes, educational meetings, store windows, and other public places. Alert cooperative leaders find numerous occasions when appropriate messages or ideas can be presented in this manner.

For exhibits in permanent locations to be most effective, they should be changed or rotated frequently. Women can help think up new ideas and subjects and thus help hold the public interest.

A number of the leading cooperatives have followed the policy of offering awards for all exhibits that qualify.

Part II. Women's Programs Conducted by Cooperatives

THIS section discusses the women's activities for five of the larger cooperatives that have rather formal

women's programs. Smaller cooperatives, however, can put many of these activities to good use in their localities.

Dairymen's League Cooperative Association²

THE Dairymen's League Cooperative Association of New York was the first major farmer cooperative in the United States to officially recognize "The Power of Women" in its activities. As early as 1925, the League began sponsoring a women's program as a part of its Membership Services. Now known as its Home Service, this program has contributed vitally to maintaining an informed membership.³

This dairy cooperative, comprised of 607 local associations, serves more than 21,000 farm families in New York and in adjacent areas in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Vermont. Organized in 1919, and with roots going back as far as 1907, the League has grown to be one of the largest fluid milk marketing cooperative in the world.

The Dairymen's League did an annual business in "Dairylea" products

equivalent to some 3.5 billion pounds of milk in 1955. Its sales consist chiefly of fluid milk, cream, butter, ice cream, cheese, and dried milk. The League assists also in obtaining dairy supplies for its producers.

Stanley Benham, the League's president, recently remarked, "Our Home Service is very well worth its modest budget. Making women partners in the co-op just as they are on the farm helps hold enthusiasm and maintain loyalty. * * * By letters, phone calls, and personal contacts, our women help us put across many a program. Our women and youth programs are making the future of our cooperative much more stable."

Objectives and Setup

In Dairymen's League, the work with women is a part of the overall membership relations activities. Through this program the women have increased their knowledge of their association and its operations. As informed members they are better able to assist with various activities when the need arises.

Objectives

Each year as the members of the Dairymen's League assemble for their

² The authors are indebted to Miss Genevieve A. Judy, Home Service Supervisor, of the Dairymen's League, for the information contained in this section.

³ For additional details about this program, see the article entitled, "Three Decades Prove Women's Program" by Mrs. Beryle Stanton, *News for Farmer Cooperatives*, April 1956, published by the Farmer Cooperative Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture.



Some of the women of Home Service at the Dairywomen's League Cooperative Association of New York gather for the co-op's annual meeting.

annual meeting, key leaders of the Home Service meet to formulate their own program and resolutions. Their broad aims have varied slightly from one year to another, depending on current developments and problems. In 1955-56, for example, the Home Service adopted the general theme, "Building the League's Future Through Quality Leadership" and listed the following major aims:

1. To develop effective leadership.
2. To support the League's membership program.
3. To strengthen the League's community relations.
4. To support the League's legislative program.
5. To promote the purposes of the League and the dairy industry.
6. To promote the use of dairy products.
7. To encourage League's youth participation.

The League's women leaders engage in a wide variety of activities to carry out these objectives. Based on many years of useful service, its women's program has become a vital force in the League's operations.

How the Program Is Organized

The Dairywomen's League has long emphasized the importance of the farm family approach in building and maintaining good member relations.

Its Home Service is spearheaded by a central office staff consisting of a supervisor, an associate supervisor, a secretary, and a part-time assistant. This small supervisory staff has been able to multiply its efforts many fold through the wide use of volunteer workers at the county and local levels.

Each of the League's 607 locals elects a farm woman leader known as the Associate Delegate for that unit. These Associate Delegates in turn obtain special help from 45 county-elected leaders known as Advisory Committee Women.

A Consultation Committee of five experienced League women functions as an overall consultation group for the Home Service. A Legislative Committee of 10 women helps channel legislative information of interest to League families.

Responsibilities of Key Leaders

How the women participate in carrying out the program can be seen from

a review of the activities of the central office staff, the Associate Delegates, the Advisory Committee Women, the Consultation Committee, and the Legislative Committee.

Central Office Assistance

The Home Service supervisory staff provides year-round assistance to its volunteer women leaders. The staff members assist with the annual meeting program, with the midyear district training conferences, and with local meetings whenever possible.

The Home Service regularly supplies its women leaders with a kit of selected educational material. Each leader receives a portfolio bearing the Dairymen's League emblem in color. This contains literature varying from pamphlets written by the dairy industry to State and Federal publications, plus several up-to-date circulars prepared by the League.

Included in the latter group are such pamphlets as, "Working Together," "Your Tour of Dairylea's Manhattan Home," and "Dairymen's League—A Family Organization."

Home Service gets out a monthly Program Letter to all its committee women. This Program Letter has been a regular feature of the Home

Service for more than 20 years. It contains timely messages from the Home Service staff, current news, recreational suggestions, recipes, and other items of interest to farm women. Published in convenient purse size, it is easy for the leaders to have with them at League meetings and to use before audiences.

Women's interests are featured also in the Dairymen's League News, the co-op's semimonthly newspaper. The News devotes a section of each issue to "The Home." This section carries news concerning women's meetings and activities. It contains many other items such as farm family living suggestions, hints to homemakers, favorite recipes, and dress patterns. The inclusion of these features helps make the newspaper of increased interest to farm women. It serves effectively also in keeping members' wives informed concerning League developments and events.

Work of Associate Delegates

The local leadership for the women's program rests with the Associate Delegate of each unit. She is usually an experienced worker, elected at the same time the local unit elects its other officers.



The head table enjoys a luncheon talk by the League's Home Service Supervisor.

Her title of Associate Delegate stems from one of her principal duties—representing the women of her local at all business and educational meetings of the Dairymen's League. While the voting privileges of the League are restricted to the regular delegates, the Associate Delegate has official status as an observer at all business sessions. Moreover, she participates actively in the special sessions conducted by the Home Service.

Her local association bears her expenses to the League's annual meeting. In return, she has the responsibility of reporting the proceedings as they relate to the women's program. These and other duties of the Associate Delegate are outlined in a purse-sized leaflet, "Ten Ways To Be An Active, Effective, Enthusiastic Associate Delegate" issued by the League. They include:

1. Knowing the local members of the League.
2. Attending all local and district meetings of the League.
3. Cooperating with the Advisory Committee Woman for the area.
4. Helping plan and publicize local League activities.
5. Proposing potential members to the League's officers or employees.
6. Inviting prospective members to League meetings.
7. Welcoming new members through home visits and correspondence.
8. Replying promptly to all communications from the League.
9. Encouraging local young people to participate in the League's activities.
10. Assisting with legislative matters of interest to the League.

Work of Advisory Committee Women

Administratively, the League is divided into 45 geographic districts, each containing one or more counties. An Advisory Committee Woman heads the women's work for each of these areas. She is elected at the same time that the other League officials of her county are chosen.

Each Advisory Committee Woman

attends the annual meeting of the League to represent the women of her area and to obtain information for them. Because of the responsibilities that go with her attendance, it is established procedure that her expenses are paid by the county unit.

Another major function of each Advisory Committee Woman is to set up and carry out a training program for the League women of her area, with the help of the Home Service office.



At each luncheon table of this annual meeting of the League, Associate Delegates had as a guest one of the League's directors.

This involves holding a midyear training meeting to which these women can come to learn more about their duties and responsibilities.

These county or district training meetings are usually scheduled from about 10 to 3:30 and include a mid-day lunch. The Advisory Committee Woman presides and a representative of the Home Service staff helps provide instructional materials. Frequently, a director or some other representative of the League is present to answer questions of interest.

Each Advisory Committee Woman is called on to attend the special educational and informational meetings sponsored by the League. Often, she assists with program planning and meeting arrangements.

Along with her other duties, she frequently serves as senior advisor to the Young Cooperators in her area. Serv-

ing in this capacity, she is in a key position to help keep the young folks interested in the League's program and activities.

Legislative Committee

A Legislative Committee of 10 women works under the general supervision of the League's officers in maintaining liaison with local members on pending legislation. These women help keep League members alerted to the importance of knowing the facts about proposed bills and knowing their legislators and their views on issues affecting farm families. The Committee's long-range goals include stimulating interest in agricultural legislation.

The Dairymen's League came to a realization many years ago that matters of legislation were vital to its existence. Thus, its leaders developed a plan of reaching out quickly and effectively when action was needed.

First, the League divided its milkshed into 10 legislative areas. Then it selected a legislative Committee Woman for each area.

These legislative women are selected by the elected men and League employees after careful consideration and consultation. It fills these posts by appointment rather than election because the background, experience, and interest of the women are a measure of their effectiveness.

This program obtains action in two ways. When time permits, the Committee Women urge the members and their wives to keep in touch with their legislators by correspondence or by personal contacts. If the action is one to be obtained quickly, the League resorts to an organized telephone plan. In such instances, the central office presents its message to the 10 Legislative Committee Women. These key women in turn call the 45 county leaders. The county leaders then phone the 607 local leaders. In this manner, results are obtained in a matter of hours. Under both circumstances, the plan has proved valuable on many occasions.

Consultation Committee

A Consultation Committee of five experienced League workers functions as an overall advisory committee for the Home Service.

This Consultation Committee was brought into being to help keep the program geared to what the women feel it should be and to maintain closer working relations with the central office staff. The League set up this Consultation Committee about 1954, following a re-evaluation of all segments of the League's organization.

The five members of the Consultation Committee are elected by the Advisory Committee Women from their respective geographic areas of the milkshed. They serve without pay but are reimbursed for their traveling expenses.

These representative leaders are available to consult on whatever matters develop within the cooperative. They may be called to the central office headquarters for special conferences, or they may be used as discussion leaders at annual meeting time.

Because of the many activities competing for attention at annual meeting time, it has proved successful to hold separate midyear conferences or leader training meetings when the women can be free to concentrate on particular problems.

The League does an intensive job of explaining the facts on legislative matters to its members. It takes, however, a bipartisan approach, presenting the many aspects of the specific problem and then suggesting the women take action on the basis of their own convictions.

To keep women alert on particular legislative problems, the association has discussion at meetings, gives both sides of the issue in the cooperative newspaper, and passes along all the pertinent information it can.

The Legislative Committee Women occupy the key positions in getting such information out to the women in the cooperative organization. Then it is up to the women themselves to

take whatever action they think best for the circumstance—perhaps seeing, writing, or telephoning their representative and presenting their feelings on the subject in meetings, casual conversation, and sometimes on radio and TV programs.

Selected Activities and Accomplishments

Fully organized from the central office to the local unit, the League's Home Service is geared to have its 21,000 women tackle almost any problem that needs attention. Let us now see in detail how its Home Service contributes to improving members' participation in annual meetings, welcoming new members, promoting dairy products, advising its Young Co-operators, and building favorable relations with the general public.

Participating in Annual Meetings

Annual meeting time for the Dairywomen's League provides striking evidence that this is a family organization. For on this occasion, farmers' wives and Young Cooperators join with the regular delegates. The wom-

en are effectively represented through an Associate Delegate for every local.

For the Advisory Committee Women and Legislative Committee Women, the annual meeting events have in recent years covered 3 days. In 1955, for example, the first day was Leaders' Day, the second Family Day, and the final one Associate Delegate Day. The overall program was based on the theme, "Building the League's Future Through Quality Leadership."

Leaders' Day provided an opportunity for developing the suggested family program for the ensuing year and preparing the proposed annual resolutions. The remainder of the day was devoted to further explanations, reports, and discussions of the Home Service program.

Family Day was designed to interest all delegates—men, women, and young folks. It gave particular emphasis to membership and educational problems. The evening program featured a talent show by the Young Cooperators.

Associate Delegate Day included items of interest to dairymen's wives. The associate delegates met in separate groups during the first 2 hours. Later they joined with the regular delegates to hear the president's annual report, resolutions committee report, and other topics of interest to delegates.

Welcoming Members

Just as women are usually at the door of their homes to greet company, the women of the League serve on welcoming committees for Dairymen's League meetings. This welcoming role has over a long period proven one of their most important contributions. It applies not only to League meetings, but also to welcoming new families into the association.

Under the League's membership program, each member's wife is encouraged to suggest other potential members to League officials. The Membership Department also notifies the Home Service of a new member's name and the local joined. The Home Service promptly sends this informa-



This talent contest brought out the best in these two contestants competing for prizes at annual meeting time—an example of co-op activity farm women engage in.

tion to the Associate Delegate or key woman for that local, suggesting that she either visit, telephone, or write to the new family.

This gives the Associate Delegate a chance to get acquainted with the new member and his family, to invite them to League meetings, and to help them with any questions. This friendly contact can mean a great deal to the new member and his family.

Promoting Dairy Products

A major activity of the Home Service has been promoting the use of milk, butter, and other dairy products. By emphasizing the importance of dairy products in the daily diet, the League has contributed substantially to increasing the consumption of these items.

Here the women are natural promoters. They are the meal planners who in furnishing food for their families 3 times daily are the best possible allies. They have a natural curiosity for new ideas in meal planning. They are interested, too, in getting the most for their food dollar and investing it where it will be of greatest benefit to their families.

Thus, the League has kept the importance of milk consumption constantly before its members. Its Home Service regularly uses such themes as "Dairy Products—A Must Regardless of One's Age," and "Dairy Products—Your Health Insurance."

Speakers and discussion panels at various meetings have brought information on use of dairy products for the women to take back to their local meetings and homes.

Preparation and description of recipes using fresh and processed milk products has been another means of promoting milk consumption.

The League's Home Service activities have contributed similarly to the "Milk for Health" and other programs of the National Dairy Council and the American Dairy Association.

Advising Young Cooperators

One of the major strengths of the Dairymen's League has been its Young



These dairy women enjoy a wholesome "milk hour" between annual meeting sessions. One of the objectives of the League's Home Service work is promoting use of dairy products.

Cooperators' program which aims to interest young folks in League activities. This Young Cooperators' program grew out of the League's interest in family activities. It seeks to interest young folks in farming, in leadership, training and in principles of cooperation.

Among helpful services the Home Service has provided its members has been that of encouraging these Young Cooperators. Quite frequently, an Advisory Committee Woman or Associate Delegate will serve as the adult adviser for the local Young Cooperators' unit.

Helping with Public Relations

Dairymen's League has for three decades realized the value of joining with the top local leaders of other rural organizations in promoting the general welfare of farm people. This has included working with the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Grange, and many other farm groups.

Representatives of the League's Home Service have been active in the New York State Council of Rural Women. This Council holds several meetings each year. One of the League's Legislative Committee Women and three of its Advisory Commit-



Talking into a radio mike are, left to right, an advisory committee woman, interviewer, and a legislative committee woman. They are discussing a legislative issue.

tee Women serve on the Council. They have participated in the Women's Joint Legislative Forum and attended legislative sessions in Albany. In recent years the Council has sponsored an educational exhibit at the New York State Fair, emphasizing the importance of milk in the diet. The Home Service Supervisor serves as an advisor.

The League's Home Service Supervisor, its Associate Supervisor, and the five members of its Consultation Committee attended the 1954 Summer Conference of the American Institute of Cooperation at Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y. This gave them an opportunity to meet and talk with folks from many other farmer cooperatives. They reported their observations to the other women leaders upon their return.

The women also give talks to many outside groups on the cooperative and matters of interest to it—to church

groups, chambers of commerce, and to businessmen's lunch clubs. They also appear on radio programs at times. And in their day to day contacts they also actively work at letting others know how the League is serving them.

The Home Service is constantly on the lookout for practical ways to get its message to farm and nonfarm families. For example, the League provides refreshment committees with a good quality paper napkin with a message for use at membership meetings and other community events. The napkins distributed in 1956 bore the following message in attractive colors: "The Dairymen's League, A Family Organization—founded to help dairy farm families improve their economic and social status, to give them a united voice in government, and to provide an organization through which they can work together in marketing milk and serving the public."

Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association, Inc.⁴

INDIANA FARM BUREAU COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION, INC., Indianapolis, has had an educational program for its farm women since about 1937.

This cooperative serves more than 160,000 Indiana farm families. In 1955, it wholesaled approximately \$58.1 million worth of petroleum products, feed, fertilizer, seed, farm equipment, insecticides, and other farm supplies. During the same year it marketed about \$79.6 million worth of farm products, consisting chiefly of grain, eggs, and wool.

Marvin J. Briggs, its general manager, has this to say about the contributions of the women to the association:

"I want to pay tribute to the fine work performed by our Indiana women. They have been loyal, devoted, and generous with their time and talents in furthering the cause of cooperation. We salute these women and trust our local managers and membership will give them wholehearted loyalty and support."

Objectives and Setup

The women's program of this statewide cooperative is unique in that it is closely allied and conducted as a part of the educational program of the Indiana Farm Bureau, Inc., the largest general farm organization in Indiana.

Objectives

This program had its beginning in 1937 when the district and county educational leaders were asked to help

promote the sale of interior paints handled by the Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association. It was not long until there was convincing evidence that such a program could lead to increased sales not only of paints but also of garden seeds, electrical appliances, and other farm and home items.

Another problem that faced the cooperative at that time was the lack of understanding on the part of the members regarding the cooperative and its affiliated groups.

These needs led to establishing the Home Department and employing a director who had both homemaking and educational experience. The director was assigned two specific jobs: (a) To compile educational material, and (b) to serve as a liaison person with the Farm Bureau and its numerous affiliates. The job has developed many new angles since its establishment, but the original two objectives are as basic now as ever.

How the Work Is Organized

The key individual now responsible for initiating, planning, and coordinating the cooperative educational program for women is the coordinator of organization relations of the cooperative. She draws on all sources of help available both within the cooperative and within the general farm organization to implement the program. Within the cooperative, the women's program is now conducted as a part of the Public Relations Department.

In commenting on her assignment, the coordinator of organization relations said, "The job of preparing suitable cooperative educational material is not the most difficult one. The biggest problem has been how best to transmit this material through the various leaders down to the mem-

⁴ The authors are indebted to Mrs. Viola Armstrong, the Coordinator of Organization Relations (formerly Director of the Home Department), of the Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association, Inc., for the information contained in this section.

bers, and in getting the members to feel a responsibility toward their cooperative.”

Most of the field aspects of the program are carried out in collaboration with the Social and Educational Department of the Indiana Farm Bureau. This department maintains social and educational committees in each of the 10 Farm Bureau districts in that State.

The women's work in each district is under the leadership of a social and educational director, who serves also as the cooperative's educational director for her district. Each district chairman in turn coordinates the activities of the county and township social and educational committees under her jurisdiction. These local leaders serve as the point of contact for any educational field work that the cooperative undertakes.

Membership Relations

The association has long been aware of the importance of getting cooperative information out to its members. Principal channels used for this have been the district, county, and township meetings. This has been fairly effective in reaching the leaders who come out to these meetings. The association also conducts tours. However, to reach a larger number of women, supplementary devices probably need to be employed.

District Conferences

Through years of experience, it has been found that the pattern that seems to work best is to hold two series of district Home Department meetings

annually. The first is held around April, the second in September. These meetings have been supplemented in recent years with cooperative workshops or summer work camps in most of the districts.

The cooperative educational program aims to bring together all of the district, county, and township social and educational leaders in this series of 10 district conferences.

These conferences are usually all-day affairs and include a midday luncheon. They serve as an occasion where these leaders can obtain information and inspiration to take back and use in their localities.

The information presented at these district meetings varies from year to year, based on the needs of the organization. For instance, if the cooperative is sponsoring a preferred stock campaign, the program provides for a discussion of the financial needs of the cooperative and the importance of members buying some of the preferred stock. Or if the Poultry Department is in the midst of a special promotion program, time is allotted on the conference agenda for it. And so on, with feed, garden seed, insecticides, and other farm supplies.

As new commodities come on the market, educational demonstrations are given showing their use and application. For example, a highlight of one of the conferences was a demonstration of a portable electric tractor light that has many uses around the farm. The demonstration of this item at the district conferences led to greatly increased sales during the subsequent months.

In Indiana farm women work through both the Indiana Farm Bureau, and the Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association, Inc., Indianapolis. At the 1955 session of the American Institute of Cooperation, Purdue University, Indiana women were hostesses at a tea.



Sometimes the conferences include educational panels. Panel members discuss not only cooperative education but information from other cooperatives and the relationship of one to the other. Several years ago one of the districts asked for a conference that would serve as a training school for new county and township leaders. This idea grew until now practically all of the 10 districts are having either a district conference, a workshop, or a summer camp devoted to this objective.

Tours

Among the techniques used in developing membership participation have been the tours conducted for the social and educational leaders, cooperative employees, and other interested people. These tours develop an appreciation for the facilities owned by the cooperative and help to arouse member interest.

Youth Activities

Indiana Farm Bureau conducts an extensive youth program and employs three or more staff members regularly to help with special meetings, camps, and other rural youth functions.

The women's program of the cooperative touches shoulders with this youth program at many places. Women leaders frequently help with youth meetings and other projects. The coordinator of organization relations in particular fulfills many speaking engagements before youth groups and Farm Bureau meetings.

Numerous suggestions are offered the leaders in a special kit of "Program Material" compiled by the social and educational department of the Indiana Farm Bureau, Inc.

An interesting adjunct to the women's educational program has been the emphasis given to Pet and Hobby Clubs for children below 4-H Club age. This program is under the direction of a professional employee of the Indiana Farm Bureau who devotes full time to this work.

The pet and hobby club program has been tested a good many years. It aims to introduce children to constructive hobbies and interests at an early age. It has assisted the cooperative educational program in several ways.

First, it has encouraged more parents to attend cooperative meetings because the children can be brought along to attend their clubs the same time the adults meet.

Second, the pet and hobby club leaders as well as the young club members are given a chance to learn about cooperative activities and services through their increased contact with cooperative meetings. This brings about a better understanding of cooperatives.

A popular activity of the clubs has been to interest the children in flower seeds. The cooperative gives a package of seeds to each child old enough to help plant and care for flowers. The parents are asked to see that the seeds are planted, and that the child does as much of the work as possible. The flowers are then shown in connection with the county picnic, 4-H affair, or Rural Life Sunday.

*** Rural-Urban Relations**

The Home Department has played an important part in developing better understanding between cooperative members and other groups. This has been done through the rural-urban teas, banquets, tours, picnics, and other public affairs sponsored by the county committees. The participation by county and city folks in these occasions has helped promote better understanding between the two groups.

The director of the Home Department has been responsible for assisting with the planning and holding of many of these rural-urban conferences. Often the women leaders can play a vital part in their contacts with other groups. This is particularly true when they are prepared to answer questions pertaining to cooperative matters.



Through district, county, and township meetings, women of the Indiana co-op passed on the word about the campaign to sell more wool.

Wool Marketing ⁵

A striking illustration of how cooperative women can contribute to volume building is provided by this cooperative's wool marketing program.

Always alert for ways to be helpful, the Home Service Department asked the new Wool Marketing Department, "Would you like a little help in promoting the wool marketing program?" The offer was promptly accepted and a million pounds was set as the goal.

This volume was achieved within 2 years and has continued steadily upward until in 1955, 1.7 million pounds of wool were marketed through this Indiana cooperative. The percentage of wool thus handled has risen from 12 percent of the potential in the State in 1947 to better than 65 percent. At least 7 counties now market nearly 100 percent of their wool through this cooperative. A part of this gain can be attributed to the volume building efforts of the ladies.

A principal factor standing in the

way of farmers selling their wool cooperatively had been the control over marketing decisions exercised by the sheep shearers. Most farmers were dependent on private shearers to get their sheep clipped. Many shearers would not agree to shear unless the farmer gave them an option to purchase the wool. These shearers in turn would sell or consign the wool to competitors.

To remedy this situation the women set to work to help round up shearers who would work with the cooperative. Names of potential shearers were forwarded systematically to the Wool Marketing Department. Cooperative officials then followed up each lead to reach an agreement and sign up the shearers' business for the cooperative. Through these efforts the number of shearers cooperating with the county associations increased from 2 in 1948 to 95 in 1951.

Another way in which the women contributed to increasing the volume of wool marketed through the cooperative was in getting more wool marketing information to farm families. Wool marketing was emphasized at the regular semiannual district meetings of the women. This educational information was then passed down to

⁵ For additional details about this program, see the article entitled, "Wide Awake Women Raise Sheep Count" by Mrs. Almer Armstrong, News for Farmer Cooperatives, July 1951, published by Farmer Cooperative Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

the localities through county and township meetings. These meetings were supplemented with printed material and other aids.

Awards were offered each year to the district and county educational leaders who attained the largest percentage increase of wool marketed through the cooperative. The top winners were given a free sightseeing trip to Boston to visit the National Wool Marketing Corporation. A number of others were awarded woolen blankets as runner-up prizes.

Altogether these efforts led to widespread publicity for the wool marketing program. At the same time the greater volume of wool marketed through the cooperative has meant better service, better prices, and lower marketing costs for wool producers.

Farm Safety

Farm safety has received considerable emphasis in the meetings with

farm women. This is a natural area of interest among wives and mothers. And the contributions women can make are many.

The director of the Home Department is the secretary of the Indiana Farm Safety Council. She has been a member of the Council from its beginning. Starting in 1953, she was elected to the Board of Directors of the National Safety Council.

The Farm Bureau's pet and hobby director is currently serving also as the director of the Farm and Home Safety program that is conducted with the cooperative. Thus, farm safety receives emphasis with the young people as well.

These contacts have been helpful in developing a farm safety program throughout Indiana. Cooperative educational meetings provide a good opportunity to emphasize various aspects of the safety program.

Pacific Supply Cooperative⁶

PACIFIC SUPPLY COOPERATIVE of Walla Walla, Wash., has developed a comprehensive women's program during recent years known as Pacific Cooperative Women.

This wholesale cooperative serves more than 80,000 farm families in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and neighboring counties. It provides these services through 123 member associations and scores of dealer agencies.

In 1955 it sold approximately \$19.2 million worth of petroleum products, fertilizer, feed, farm appliances, tires,

insecticides, and other farm and home supplies. During the same year, it marketed about \$4.2 million worth of seed and grain, making for a total business volume of about \$23.4 million.

Objectives and Setup

During the 1951 annual meeting of the Pacific Supply Cooperative, there was a spontaneous request for a program for women when the topic was presented at a luncheon. The women elected temporary officers. The editor of the Homemakers Department of the Pacific Northwest Cooperator, the co-op's house organ, agreed to advise the organization and to serve as liaison with management.

⁶The authors are indebted to Mrs. Helen King of Pacific Supply Cooperative, Inc., for the information used in the preparation of this section.

Objectives

Under the name of Pacific Cooperative Women (PCW), the women have pledged themselves to do all that they can to promote the welfare of their local and regional co-ops, doing whatever work is most needed. They seek to emphasize cooperative education and to win friends for farmer cooperatives at every opportunity. This realistic approach has attracted more and more women into active participation.

The women asked that PCW be kept inside the co-op instead of being a separate organization. Closely integrated in the co-op, the program has gained the confidence of the directors and managers, some of whom were apprehensive at the start.

How the Program Operates

The editor of the Homemakers' Department devotes a major share of her time to women's activities. She provides administrative and consultative services in developing a varied program through discussion group techniques.

To match the geographic sections of the regional that stretch across a wide area, six PCW districts have been created. Women directors and assistant directors are elected for each of the six units during annual district meetings in the spring, with one-half of the board being elected in alternate years. Election of the PCW directors has been placed in the districts to give more women a chance to participate.

Local women within the districts report co-op news, demonstrate various home crafts, take part in Co-op Kitchen Parties, in radio and TV programs, and correspond with people in other lands. They also attend annual meetings of their local co-ops.

Homemakers Department.—To aid its women leaders, the women's department of the regional's newspaper issues periodic newsletters to the key women of Pacific Cooperative Women, which includes the co-op reporters, district directors and chairman of the

local chapters of PCW. This contains behind-the-scenes reports on how promotional activities can be carried out, praise for the women who have helped their co-ops, suggestions for the co-op craft program, newsgathering, local publicity, and "co-op family" news.

Recognition is given the women in the newspaper's Homemaker Department as well, with a calendar of coming events.

An eye-catching masthead has been developed for the news and literature coming from the Homemakers Department. A 4-column wide sketch of a woman hanging up the letters "H-O-M-E-M-A-K-E-R-S" on a clothesline symbolizes the Homemakers Department as a place to "air one's ideas."

This masthead has been reproduced also on 5" x 8" correspondence cards and on booklets published for the leaders. These materials are distributed through the women's meetings in the local co-ops and through PCW's mail order service. The leaflets pertain to co-op recipes, co-op craft, and other homemaking ideas. All have short paragraphs of information about cooperatives sandwiched in. Recipe leaflets of co-op products, such as those from the Northwest Nut Growers, Portland, Oreg., have been distributed by the thousands.

A woman's face with a big smile and a wink has become the trademark for the department.

Selected Activities

One of the first jobs taken on by the women was collecting and sending in local co-op news from busy co-op managers and members. With the assistance of an increasing number of women, these reporters have taken responsibility for the arrangement of craft demonstrations and other co-op sponsored activities. The reporters also serve as publicity agents for these local cooperative events. Thus, they have been of assistance both to their co-operative and to the general public.



Demonstrating various home crafts is an important part of the work of Pacific Cooperative Women.

Co-op News Reporting ⁷

Aim of the program is to have at least one dependable homemaker within each local cooperative serve as its co-op reporter. These stories are then published in the Pacific Northwest Cooperator or in the Homemakers' News Letter. Stories may also appear in the local paper.

To initiate this reporting service, letters were sent to the local managers suggesting that a homemaker be appointed to serve as reporter for their local association. Each woman receiving such an appointment then indicated her acceptance by signing and returning a stamped information card. Those unable to accept were asked to suggest someone else. In this way, it was planned that all localities would ultimately be represented by reporters.

The results have been most encouraging. Already, more than 145 key women are contributing news regularly. The editor of the Pacific Northwest Cooperator has been enthusiastic and encouraging from the start. He

⁷ For additional details about this program, see the article entitled "Pacific Women Make Steady Progress" by Catherine E. Hardy, News for Farmer Cooperatives, December 1954 (Reprint 79), published by the Farmer Co-operative Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

pays for the articles published and gives bylines to the women contributors.

One reporter made a scrapbook of all the news stories appearing in the local paper as a result of the homemakers' program and her efforts. Then, she multiplied the number of printed inches by the advertising space rate showing the co-op managers and directors what it would have cost them. She edits a regular mimeographed local member bulletin for the co-op as well.

Craft Demonstrations

Another major activity of the Pacific Cooperative Women has been that of sponsoring craft demonstrations. Whether the demonstrations involve breadmaking, candlemaking, textile painting, or other craft, they help to create community goodwill and often bring additional business to the farm supply store.

Breadmaking.—Good Co-op Bread demonstrations are particularly popular. They help to draw in local home economists, 4-H Club leaders, and other women. They result in widespread requests for co-op recipes. They build up a demand for co-op flour. The freshly baked products resulting from these demonstrations

are often served to the attendants for refreshments or exhibited at rural affairs.

Candlemaking.—Another type of demonstration that has taken hold especially well has been that of making co-op Glow candles. These candle-making demonstrations were initially popularized by Consumers Cooperative Association of Kansas City, Mo. They provide a good means of bringing many new friends to the cooperative store which serves as a distribution point for the wax, wicks, and other supplies needed.

Over a television station in Portland, Oreg., a representative of Pacific Cooperative Women showed how to make Glow candles, at the invitation of a local branch of a national women's organization.

One co-op reporter gave a specimen candle to her local radio station, reaping a fine harvest of advertising which sold several tons of wax for her co-op.

Textile Painting.—Another favorite demonstration has been that of textile painting and liquid embroidering. These crafts have practical as well as artistic uses. They consist of using special paints to make designs on textiles, paper, and other materials. Printed instructions are available describing the technique.

Co-op Kitchen Parties

Co-op Kitchen Parties are the newest phase of the PCW's activities. The parties are a logical followup to the demonstration meetings in the local co-ops, since they are held in the kitchens in the farm neighborhoods, with the hostess inviting her friends in for a cup of coffee and a snack.

A co-op employee provides a seasonal educational talk relating to farm supplies. In the spring this talk is usually on feeds. In the summer the talk may be on insects and co-op insecticides. And in the fall it may cover co-op freezer demonstrations.

Sometimes co-op Glow candles are shown. Co-op literature and recipe booklets are distributed. The friend-



Painting, pitchforks and public relations went well together when the women met at Tillamook (Oreg.) Farmers Cooperative.

liness between co-op employees and members has increased greatly with these popular kitchen parties.

Member and Public Relations

In substance, the local chapters of Pacific Cooperative Women are public and member relations action committees for their local associations. The women's program has become a vital part of the public and member relations work in all the local associations where it has been started.

The PCW women have admitted that had they been asked "to serve on a public relations committee" they would have run the other way. But they have been willing to try their hand at demonstrating a craft to help their co-op. Self-confidence has grown and public relations is now one of the items included in the plan for a year-book.

Sales have reflected favorably the increased time that is being spent in the co-ops by the women. When women go to the co-op for a textile painting class they often see and buy co-op merchandise. The sale of co-op refrigerators and freezers is up. One co-op manager has kept a chart showing this trend.

The growing number of meeting

rooms being provided in local co-ops for the women is an indication of the recognition being given their public and member relations work.

From the first the women's program has not been restricted to co-op members. The craft and bread demonstrations in the local co-ops have attracted people who would never have put a foot inside a co-op otherwise.

Managers have endorsed the idea of making friends in the community with this service whether these people ever become patrons or members. As one manager said, "These Glow candles get our co-op talked about in the most favorable way possible. It is wonderful advertising."

The PCW women early received some sage advice from a woman assistant co-op manager who did a daily 15-minute radio program for her co-op. She said, "If I had spent the whole 15 minutes talking 'co-op,' many would have reached to turn off the radio immediately. Instead, I made the time as interesting as possible with bits of poetry, philosophy, bargains at the co-op, news comments, and then just one or two sentences about co-ops in general." She won prizes in her State cooperative council's contest with her radio show.

The same idea has been used in the demonstrations in local co-ops. Co-op crafts attract people for a hospitable time. Then occasional comments are made in a conversational manner about co-op facts.

After one of these demonstration meetings, other requests come from clubs, schools, churches and neighborhood groups for demonstrations at their meetings. This gives the co-op women a chance to carry their story farther and to gain more friends for their co-op.

International Interests

Numerous Pacific Cooperative Women have found time along with their other activities to take part in two international friendship projects. The first of these is the annual Peace Arch celebration at Blaine, Wash., on the

United States-Canadian border. Since 1953 the Pacific Cooperative Women and the Cooperative Women's Guild of British Columbia have made the Peace Arch the scene of an annual international picnic. Besides being an occasion of fun and fellowship, it has afforded a stimulating exchange of ideas. News accounts and pictures regarding this event have appeared in many papers abroad.

Secondly, there is the "Pen Pal" correspondence project. Friendly letters have been exchanged since 1951 with several hundred co-op women in England and other foreign countries. Names are supplied by the International Cooperative Women's Guild. Recipes, co-op ideas, souvenirs, family snapshots, and co-op periodicals have crossed back and forth over the ocean. This program has been so well received that already it includes friends from more than a dozen foreign countries. Many of the PCW women bring their "Pen Pal" letters and souvenirs to local and district meetings to show to others.

Meetings

The helpfulness of the PCW program is evidenced by the improved attendance of members at the regional, district, and local meetings.

Regional Annual Meetings

Annual meeting time at Pacific Supply Cooperative has come to be more and more a family affair, with the development of the women's program.

In discussing plans for a women's program in 1951, the women asked for educational activities instead of just entertainment and time for shopping during the regional convention. Following this request, the 2½ days now offer craft instruction, promotional demonstrations, exhibits, Pen Pal displays, discussion meetings, cooperative talks, and local annual meeting suggestions. Business sessions and fun complete the program.

More women attending each year made it necessary to devote one of the

largest rooms to their activities. A contest contributed the name "Hen House" to the ladies' meeting room, a catchy name that has given excellent publicity.

A Hen House Fair, complete with blue, red, and white ribbons, was initiated in 1955. Women brought their co-op good bread, textile painting, Glow candles, and other products from all over the region. The display was so impressive that many men visited the "Hen House." And several more co-op managers became interested in a women's program.

Each year an effort is made to introduce new ideas at the regional level which will help promote better local annual meetings. For example, the Hen House Fair—ribbons and all—was later copied at many local annual meetings. Since the Danish plan of giving ribbons to every entry is used, they serve as remembrance advertising.

District Meetings

PCW district meetings play an important role. Besides being the time for electing PCW directors, these meetings provide training in news reporting and craft demonstrations.

District meetings are usually held on the same day as those of the local co-op directors, since travel costs and convenience are a problem. The district PCW director presides at the meetings, and the Homemakers' editor assists with the educational aspects.

Co-op women from both sides of the Canadian-United States border met at the Peace Arch for a picnic, an event that Pacific Cooperative Women look forward to each year.



District meetings are usually well attended by the women, the managers, and local co-op directors.

Women at the PCW district meetings say, "I never used to go to our co-op annual meeting because I just felt out of place and in the way. Now, I enjoy going and I like to listen to the business part as well as the women's section."

After the district meetings, the PCW directors hold a 1-day executive session at the home office of the regional, planning the program for the women's share of the fall regional annual meeting. The plans are based on worksheets filled out by the women at the district meetings, thus using many people's ideas.

Each of the six PCW directors takes the responsibility of the preliminary committee work for one section of the women's part in the regional annual meeting, including that of presiding.

Visiting the home office of Pacific Supply Cooperative helps the PCW directors understand how local co-ops function as a part of the regional federation. Also, it provides an opportunity for observing the whole process of editing the regional paper.

Local Meetings

Since the PCW program has been in effect, there has been a big improvement in local annual meetings. Most locals now specifically invite the women to attend. Many feature craft demonstrations or a Hen House Fair to attract the women. The women like this better than just being asked to cook and serve the meal.

Some co-ops call in the women to help plan the annual meeting. The women assist with the program arrangements and ideas. A number take care of the local publicity and invitations to members.

A number of locals choose their co-op reporter at annual meeting time along with their directors. Better attendance by the women is resulting.

One manager gives his women's organization credit for building the interest and attendance at their meetings

from under a hundred to over 500 in just a few years.

The increasing friendliness at the women's activities and annual meetings is creating a fine atmosphere of "belonging" and the sense of "owning" the co-ops. There is a spirit of fun in the gatherings. Said a co-op manager, "Why, we never had such a good time before at a co-op meeting. We didn't know what we had been missing."

The women have begun now to want a more formal organization in many areas. They are forming local chapters of Pacific Cooperative Women with elected local officers. Several of these groups have requested a handbook on organization and program.

Local and district PCW leaders are providing many ideas for preparing the handbook. These include such items as hospitality and food, co-op crafts, annual meetings, open house meetings, publicity, Pen Pals, youth programs, discussion groups, co-op



Eighty PCW women came to this district meeting in Ontario, Oreg. Just the year before only 8 women were present.

education, membership bulletin, kitchen parties, sales promotion and welcoming members.

Southern States Cooperative ⁸

AMONG the outstanding women's programs developed by farm supply associations is that of Southern States Cooperative, Richmond, Va. This large cooperative serves more than 320,000 farm families in the 6-State area of Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Tennessee.

Southern States Cooperative did an annual business amounting to better than \$150 million in 1954-55. This volume consisted chiefly of feeds, fertilizer, seeds, petroleum, and general farm supplies. In addition to providing a dependable source for farm sup-

plies, it markets eggs and grain for farmers in some areas.

Its Farm Home Advisory Service, initiated in 1943, has been a major link in its membership relations program.

In reporting on the consistently rapid growth of Southern States Cooperative from its inception in 1923 to its 1955 annual meeting, General Manager O. E. Zacharias, Jr., said, "Southern States' system of farmer control is thoroughly democratic yet feasible for a large organization with many thousands of members in a large 6-State area. In addition to the 30,000 local board members about 2,550 farm women elected at local annual meetings serve on Farm Home Advisory Committees in 425 communities."

⁸The authors are indebted to Mrs. Sarah Porter Ellis, now retired, and to Miss Mattie Kessler of Southern States Cooperative for the information contained in this section.

Objectives and Setup

The activities of the Farm Home Advisory Committee (FHAC) program of Southern States Cooperative encompass five broad objectives. A full-time Director of Farm Home Service supervises the program.

Objectives

The objectives of the FHAC program are described as follows:

1. To understand the fundamental principles of farmer-owned and farmer-controlled cooperatives.
2. To represent the farm homes of the community in all Southern States Cooperative's activities.
3. To advise Southern States' management how its services and commodities may be improved in the interest of farm people.
4. To attend and help secure attendance at Southern States Cooperative's membership meetings.
5. To promote the efficient and successful operation of Southern States Cooperative as a whole.

How Work Is Organized

In supervising the Farm Home Advisory Committee (FHAC) program, the Director of Farm Home Service spends a considerable share of her time conducting training meetings in the field. She is assisted by a full-time office secretary.

Administratively, the women's program is conducted as an integral part of the Membership Relations Department. The facilities of the central office are available to assist with the editorial, mailing, and other services essential for a full fledged membership program.

Locally, the women's work is centered in a Farm Home Advisory Committee (FHAC) of six members. Except for petroleum agencies, each local Southern States service agency has such an advisory committee. About 425 committees were functioning in 1955-56.

The six FHAC members for each locality are elected for staggered terms of 3 years each at the regular local an-

nual meeting. No member may succeed herself. This paves the way for two new members each year.

A nominating committee seeks out strong candidates for each vacancy. Usually, the committee presents at least twice as many candidates as there are vacancies. This gives the annual meeting attendants a choice, makes for good membership relations, and adds to the distinction of being elected an FHAC member.

FHAC Guidebook

Southern States Cooperative was probably the first farmer cooperative to issue a guidebook for its women workers. Revised and improved each year, it has evolved into a useful guide for FHAC members.

This handy reference outlines the general objectives of the FHAC program for the year and sketches some of the background considerations. Each FHAC worker gets a copy.

The guide lists the numerous individual and group activities through which the FHAC members can contribute to their cooperative. Each manual contains a separate check list so that each member can conveniently designate the activities on which she will try to carry through.

For convenience of identification, the proposed individual activities are printed on paper of one color while the proposed group activities are listed on paper of another color. Comparable loose sheets are provided so that the central office at Richmond, Va., may be kept advised of the activities of each FHAC group and member.

Among other things, the FHAC guide outlines the duties of the FHAC chairman, the FHAC secretary, and the individual FHAC members. It provides a list also of many different types of educational demonstrations suitable for cooperative meetings.

The manual in addition sets forth the conditions under which the central office will provide certain meeting supplies, and assist the local service agency with meeting announcements, door prizes, and refreshments. It aids



On the stage are over 100 Farm Home Advisory Committee women who came to take part in the annual meeting of Southern States Cooperative at Richmond, Va.

greatly in effecting a coordinated women's program for the large area served by this cooperative.

FHAC Meetings and Demonstrations

Each summer the Southern States Cooperative sponsors a planning conference to which it invites selected FHAC leaders and cooperative personnel. This association has also developed a series of regional training meetings for its FHAC members. Another major activity of the FHAC groups has been that of sponsoring appropriate demonstration meetings in their communities.

Annual FHAC Planning Conference

The annual FHAC planning conferences help obtain the experiences and views of FHAC members, district and local managers, and others who have a responsibility in carrying out the program.

Such planning conferences not only contribute to developing a practical and well-rounded program, but they have the added advantage of obtaining the wholehearted support of those

who participate in their formulation. This is particularly significant with district and local personnel on whose cooperation the execution of the program so largely depends.

Beginning in the summer of 1955, Southern States Cooperative's management established an overall Farm Home Advisory Committee. This committee consisted of 9 FHAC members, 4 representative local managers, and 4 representative district managers. These representatives meet with the staff of the Farm Home Service, membership relations, and other cooperative personnel for a 2-day conference to help plan the FHAC program for the ensuing year. Their suggestions are reflected in the program set forth in "Your Farm Home Advisory Committee Guidebook, 1955-56."

The benefits derived from this overall FHAC Advisory Group are far-reaching. It aids materially in evaluating the program of the past year and in developing appropriate suggestions for the ensuing year. It provides additional leadership assistance for the regional FHAC training meetings and local FHAC demonstration meetings and conferences. Also, it offers a good

means of giving appropriate recognition to local FHAC members who have made outstanding contributions.

Regional FHAC Training Meetings

Southern States Cooperative has developed a series of regional training meetings for its FHAC workers. These meetings are held on a regional basis each winter throughout the cooperative's six-State territory. Each meeting brings together about 6 to 10 FHAC groups from nearby retail service agencies.

Altogether, there are about 64 such regional training meetings each year. Since the membership is on a rotating basis, attendance at one of these regional meetings is a new experience for about a third of the women there.

These regional FHAC meetings are 1-day events starting at 10 o'clock and closing about 3:30. Most of the members live within 1 or 2 hours driving distance. Thus, the meetings are within reasonable reach of the FHAC members.

The director of SSC's Farm Home Service conducts these training meetings. They include a variety of talks, demonstrations, discussions, quizzes, and visual aids.

At least one illustrated talk or motion picture is shown at each meeting. One year it was the movie "We"—the story of Southern States Cooperative. These visual aids help FHAC members absorb a lot of information in a short time. Generally, the same film or slides are available for each FHAC group to use locally, another desirable feature.

These meetings usually include one or two demonstrations involving Southern States products and services. For example, the women may demonstrate how to prepare fruits, vegetables, and meats for deep freezing or a district or local manager may demonstrate how to use co-op paint in redecorating a kitchen or bedroom.

To encourage a good turnout of FHAC members, Southern States Cooperative in 1955 offered to give a free trip to the Southern States' stockholders meeting at Richmond for each FHAC that had as many as 5 or 6 of its members present at its regional training meeting. This resulted in such a favorable response that 104 FHAC women won trips to Richmond that fall.

Where possible the district and local agency managers of the area also try to attend. Generally, these men have some responsibility in connection with the day's program. FHAC members and guests are served a luncheon by the cooperative, featured by short talks and informal discussions.

Important objectives of the meeting are to introduce each FHAC member to the annual FHAC guidebook for the year, described on page 34.

To the extent that time permits, the FHAC group for each service agency meets separately before the meeting adjourns to determine the items it expects to emphasize during the next 12 months. This starts them working together. After returning to their communities, they complete their local plan of work. The program evolved then becomes their objective for the ensuing year.

These people met to help plan the 1955-56 program of Farm Home Advisory Committee work. They include one FHAC member from each of the co-op's 9 election districts, 4 local co-op managers, 4 district managers, and the Director of the Women's Program.



Demonstration Meetings

The demonstration meetings are generally held at the cooperative's local service agency, a community center, or in private homes, depending on the facilities available and the probable attendance.

The major purpose of a demonstration meeting is to create interest in Southern States' commodities and services. An important function of the demonstration may be a short talk by a SSC representative, or perhaps a movie or slide talk depicting some of the services available.

The demonstration or illustrated talk may stress any one of a dozen or more items. Typical of these are: Freezing farm products; preparing desserts and salads; baking with family flour; pressure cooking; interior decoration; selection, use, and care of washing machines; preparation of oven meals; the co-op's quality control program; canning foods; egg marketing; production, testing, and treating seeds; feed formulas and uses.

To give these demonstrations or illustrated talks, the FHAC usually calls on a local home economist, a 4-H Club leader, a 4-H Club team, or a representative from Southern States Cooperative. The type of demonstration determines the kind of individual best suited for this purpose. District and local SSC managers have filled this niche in many instances. In other cases the FHAC members themselves have performed the demonstrations.

To encourage all-day attendance at these demonstration meetings, lucky number tickets are given out at the beginning of the meeting. Appropriate prizes are given to the winners at the close. Frequently, the products of the demonstration are included among the prizes. For example, the preparation of a dressed chicken for the home freezer could logically end with the dressed chicken being given to the lucky winner.

Sometimes the demonstrations are accompanied by a movie or film strip presentation. Among the slides shown



Members of FHAC's help to present the story of the quality control program Southern States follows in the manufacture of starting and growing mash.

have been "Quality—It Does Not Just Happen," and "Southern States Feed—Good to the Last Bite."

An important portion of the demonstration is the opportunity to ask questions of the district manager, local agency manager, and other Southern States Cooperative personnel present. Announcements are made that the commodity being demonstrated may be secured from the local cooperative service agency.

Light refreshments usually follow the meeting. A part of the expense for prizes and refreshments is paid by the Southern States Cooperative, provided the session meets certain minimum requirements. The central office sends out the invitations.

For demonstration meetings complying with the minimum standards, the cooperative will contribute one-third, or not to exceed \$10, of the local agency's cost for the prizes given. The association will also contribute one-third of the local agency's cost for light refreshments. This is limited to 7 cents per person attending.

Duties of FHAC Members

The general duties of the Farm Home Advisory Committee members are reflected in the previously mentioned objectives. Each FHAC representative has numerous individual and

collective opportunities to serve her cooperative.

Among the individual activities suggested are the following:

1. Attending local cooperative meetings.

2. Attending the annual FHAC regional training school.

3. Talking up Southern States supplies and services among friends and neighbors.

4. Keeping up to date on cooperative activities by reading the "Cooperative Farmer" (the association's monthly magazine) and by frequent visits to the nearest cooperative service agency.

5. Reading selected literature such as "The History and Philosophy of Southern States," "Southern States—The Pioneer," "You and Southern States," and "It's Your Business."

In addition to the individual activities mentioned above, the FHAC members can render various other services as a group or committee. These include:

1. Helping plan and carry out local annual meetings.

2. Holding cooperative parties and demonstrational meetings.

3. Touring SSC feed mills, fertilizer plants, warehouses, and other facilities.

4. Sponsoring co-op youth activities.

5. Conducting supply hunts in local service agencies.

Youth Activities

One of the more recent activities of the Farm Home Advisory Committees has been that of sponsoring "Youth Co-op Week" in their own communities. Participants in the co-op tour are encouraged to enter a Co-op Essay Contest upon their return.

Youth Co-op Week

Each FHAC locality is encouraged to set aside 1 week annually for Youth Co-op Week.

During this particular week the local FHAC group works with the local teachers and club leaders, the local

cooperative agency manager, and the Southern States district manager in an effort:

- (1) To acquaint future farmers and homemakers with Southern States Cooperative's products and services.

- (2) To familiarize farm youth with the principles of farmer cooperation.

- (3) To show rural youth how farmer cooperatives help "to make the business of farming pay better."

- (4) To lower farm costs by increasing the volume of goods and services handled by Southern States Cooperative.

Plans are made to have the local FFA chapter, the local 4-H Club, and other youth groups make one or more business educational tours during this period. Usually, this will include visiting a typical Southern States Cooperative service agency. In many instances, it will include a cooperative feed mill, a fertilizer plant, a farm supply warehouse, or other Southern States facilities.

Frequently, a farm supply hunt or a seed identification contest will be conducted in connection with the visit. These activities help to acquaint the young people with the numerous items handled by the cooperative.

The transportation for these educational trips is provided locally. The central office reimburses the host agency a nominal sum for light refreshments for all tours officially authorized.

Co-op Essay Contest

The Essay Contest is open to all young people of Southern States patrons between the ages of 12 and 19. The participants are divided in two age groups: those under 16, and those 16 years or older. The essays of the two groups are then judged separately. Subject of the essay during the 1955-56 season was, "What Southern States Cooperative Means to the Farmer."

To qualify for the contest the youth must register and take one of the tours specified by the local Farm Home Advisory Committee. The essay must be between 600 and 1,500 words in



At Richmond, Va., manager of the cooperative seed and farm supply warehouse discusses Southern States fertilizer with Farm Home Advisory Committee touring the plant.

length, submitted in typed form within 15 days after the tour.

The contest is carried out at three levels: Local, State, and regional. Suitable cash prizes are offered at each level, depending on the number of entries.

All local essays go to an essay chairman appointed by the FHAC for the local agency point. The essays from each locality are judged separately.

The first-placing local essays then go to the Richmond office where three qualified judges select the State and regional winners. Each of the 6 States in the Southern States patronage area is then entitled to a State winner—provided at least 20 localities have submitted entries.

The first-placing essays from each State are then judged against each other to determine the three top prizes. Special educational trips or cash prizes go to the top winners. The cash awards are made to the school or club designated by the winner. In 1955–56 the first and second place regional prize winners had the opportunity of presenting their essays at the annual Southern States stockholders' meeting.

Additional details of the contest are given in a special brochure distributed widely by the FHAC members.

Annual Stockholders Meeting

Southern States FHAC Program has been linked to its annual stockholders meeting in several ways.

First, the local FHAC women meet regularly with the local SSC directors or advisors to help plan the annual meeting for their local service agencies. Usually, this includes a co-op quiz contest, a local talent contest, or other special features in which men, women, and young people participate. Local winners then take part in district elimination contests. Finally, the district winners compete for top awards at the annual Stockholders Meeting.

For example in 1953, many Southern States' women won expense-paid trips to the Annual Stockholders Meeting in Richmond to participate in its quiz contest or "Basket Ball Tourney." This event created much interest in cooperative education.

In 1955 and 1956, each FHAC group had a chance to win an expense-paid trip for one of its members to attend the Annual Stockholders Meeting. This honor went to each FHAC group succeeding in having 5 of its 6 members present at its District FHAC Training Conference. In 1955, 104 FHAC members attended the 2-day annual stockholders event under this plan.

The work of the FHAC women received special recognition during the course of the meeting. The Home Service supervisor and 2 leading FHAC members gave talks before all of the delegates and guests. Another highlight of the meeting was the presentation of a retirement gift

to the Home Service supervisor by the general manager in recognition of her many years of service to the co-op.

Another feature of the 1955 Annual Meeting was a special breakfast for the women and a number of guests. Brief talks by top management encouraged the women workers. While in Richmond, most of the FHAC visitors toured the co-op's offices and its large general warehouse.

Similar expense-paid trips to the Southern States' Annual Stockholders Meeting, or to the Annual Summer Conference of the American Institute of Cooperation, Raleigh, N. C., were offered to the members, members' wives, or farm youths, who rounded up the largest volume of new business under its booster contest in 1956. Many women won trips under this plan.

Utah Poultry and Farmers Cooperative⁹

ANOTHER cooperative that has a well-established women's program is the Utah Poultry and Farmers Cooperative of Salt Lake City. This farmer cooperative serves approximately 6,000 producer-members in Utah and southern Idaho.

Utah Poultry and Farmers Cooperative did an annual business amounting to about \$17.3 million in 1955. That year it helped its growers market approximately \$9.7 million worth of eggs, poultry, and turkeys. In addition to its marketing services, it handled about \$7.6 million worth of feed, containers, fertilizer, petroleum products, and other production supplies for the farmers in that area.

In giving his 1955 report, General Manager H. M. Blackhurst expressed his appreciation to the women by saying, "I want to pay tribute to the very fine work performed by the women's auxiliary of the association. * * * They have been loyal, devoted, and generous with their time and talents. * * * We salute these fine women and urge our membership to give them wholehearted loyalty and support."

Objectives and Setup

Officially organized in 1941, the women's Auxiliary barely got started when wartime travel restrictions put a halt to conventions and large group meetings. But the early efforts were sufficiently encouraging for the women's program to be reactivated following World War II.

Objectives

The Auxiliary aims to further the business interests of the cooperative by conducting educational programs that will lead to well-informed and enthusiastic members. It has its own constitution and bylaws which spell out its framework and purposes.

How the Work is Organized

The Auxiliary's activities are conducted as an integral part of the cooperative. Thus, the women's work is closely coordinated with the total educational program of the parent organization. Staff and editorial assistance are provided by the manager's office whenever possible.

A full set of elected officers provides the Auxiliary's leadership. The officers include a president, a vice president, a secretary-treasurer, a parliamentarian, a publicity manager, 2 or 3 advisers-at-large, and an appointed chorister. These officers are chosen

⁹ The authors are indebted to Mrs. Edna Ohlweiler, of Paradise, Utah, president of the Women's Auxiliary of this cooperative, for the information contained in this section.

at an annual election meeting held each fall.

The key officer is the Auxiliary's president. Her duties require her to travel widely throughout the patronage area. She receives no salary from the cooperative but is reimbursed for her out-of-pocket costs. Thus, the women's program operates on a relatively small budget.

The State is divided into three districts—northern, central, and southern. The Auxiliary has officers living in each district who are available to assist locals whenever they are needed.

Each of the local associations belonging to the cooperative has its own unit of the auxiliary, also its own set of officers. The effectiveness of each local is dependent on the quality of the local leadership.

The task of keeping a good local auxiliary activated in each of the three districts is not a light one. A number need special encouragement and assistance from time to time. When these occasions arise, the Auxiliary's president or one of her associates works with the branch manager and local representatives to effect a solution.

Auxiliary Meetings

Much of the educational work of the Utah Poultry and Farmers Cooperative is done through its annual meeting activities and through district and local meetings.

Liven Annual Meetings

One of the best evidences of the Auxiliary's work is at annual meeting time. Every cooperative leader is familiar with the help that women members can give with registration, recep-

tion, entertainment, meal arrangements, and other details of the annual meeting. They can be of equal help with program planning.

In fact, the women of Utah Poultry and Farmers Cooperative have participated actively in the annual meetings activities for many years. Beginning in 1938, the women were given the responsibility of providing a half-day's program at the annual convention. This met with such encouraging success that it led to the permanent organization of the women 3 years later.

The participation of the women in the program planning as well as other phases of the annual meeting has made the program more representative of women's interests. This has helped improve the attendance and general interests of the members and their wives.

Attend District Meetings

Occasional district meetings of the Auxiliary have been held in various key population centers. These meetings have been an important phase of the Auxiliary's educational program. They have enabled a large number of women to hear and learn about the cooperative's activities, and have helped to stimulate local programs.

These meetings include educational, social, and recreational features. Several have featured tours depicting the latest methods in poultry operation and housing. Also, educational films have been used to explain cooperative problems and activities.

Hold Local Meetings

Local auxiliaries hold periodic meetings at which they present items of

Spearhead of the Auxiliary's program and activities are these five Executive Committee Women.



interest to members. These involve such topics as better egg care, disease control, and coming cooperative events.

The president of the State Auxiliary and the nearest member of the Auxiliary's executive committee attend as many of these meetings as practicable. Frequently some State or district leader serves as resource speaker. Group discussion usually follows the formal part of the program.

Meetings are generally held in a member's home or a local community center. The wives frequently bring their husbands. A social hour and refreshments follow the meeting.

Better Egg Care

One of the earliest and most publicized activities of the Auxiliary has been its Better Egg Care Program. This activity has been at the very heart of the Auxiliary's educational work—and a natural for poultrywomen.

As one member put it, "Women case, or help to case, most of the eggs handled by our cooperative. They have a choice seat when it comes to egg inspection."

Stress Quality

This Better Egg Care Program is beamed at making every producer and egg handler more quality conscious. Campaigns to promote the production and sale of quality eggs are underway daily.

"We must do our part as producers," say these Auxiliary leaders, "to see that our eggs receive the best possible care. We can do this: (1) By gathering the eggs at least three times daily, (2) by replacing the nesting material often, (3) by sanding (rather than washing) any eggs that need cleaning, and (4) by keeping the eggs at proper temperature and humidity while on the farm."

By constantly stressing the above points, a higher percentage of the producers' eggs are clean and attractive when delivered for market. This makes for improved marketability,

longer shelf life, and better consumer satisfaction. It means that a higher proportion of the eggs can qualify for top quality prices.

Visit Retail Distributors

Another aspect of the Auxiliary's Better Egg Care Program is that of urging prompt and adequate cooling of eggs by local distributors.

Top quality eggs do not remain top quality long unless they are kept cool. Busy storekeepers are sometimes neglectful of this important fact. If upon delivery from the warehouse the eggs are permitted to stand in a warm store for too long a period before they are recooled, their quality deteriorates very rapidly.

Representatives of the Auxiliary frequently watch to see whether local store managers are observing adequate care in this connection. Where improvement is needed, they discuss the matter with the store manager in a constructive way.

The Auxiliary members also call on various food store managers to ask for co-op brand eggs. If the local store is already handling co-op eggs, it opens the way for a friendly exchange of information. Similarly, if the store is handling eggs from another source, the women try to convince the manager of the importance of handling quality eggs of known reliability.

These "grassroot" retail contacts are a fruitful field of endeavor.

Educational Aids

Besides furnishing educational kits with program ideas for its officers and members, the women's Auxiliary also sponsors local contests for recipes using poultry or eggs.

Provide Educational Kits

Educational kits have been developed to aid the Auxiliary officers and members. These kits provide ideas for programs for both young and old. They contain suggestions for team demonstrations, essay contests, and local entertainment.



Product promotion is an important phase of the Auxiliary's program. President of the Auxiliary holds up a poster of luscious fried chicken, designed to whet any consumer's appetite.

Contents of these kits vary from year to year. Usually they include a copy of the constitution and bylaws, a short history of the women's Auxiliary, suggestions for local meetings, and other timely pamphlets. Typical of the subjects included in recent years are: "How You Can Get More Money for Your Eggs," "Know the Eggs You Buy," "Egg Dishes for Any Meal," and "Egg Quality and Egg Holding Rooms."

Sponsor Recipe Contests

Among the more recent activities of the Auxiliary has been a Recipe Contest among the women members. Each farm woman is encouraged to get out her favorite recipe using poultry or eggs and then bring it with the prepared dish to a local meeting.

The five choicest recipes are then selected for submission to the State Auxiliary. The winning recipes are compiled into a recipe book for distribution to the members at the next annual meeting. Appropriate awards

go to the individual and to the local excelling in this activity.

A number of the locals have served a smorgasbord luncheon featuring various dishes that have been entered in the contest. These special lunches have helped popularize new dishes featuring poultry and poultry products.

Public Relations

The Auxiliary has worked closely with the Utah State Agricultural College, the State Extension Service, the State Department of Education, and other public agencies in all its activities.

It has been helpful in promoting the national "Chicken of Tomorrow" contest in Utah. About 70 percent of the participants in 1955 came from cooperative families. This contest has as its objective the development of a superior type of meat chicken. Special awards are given to 4-H Club members and to FFA students whose projects excel in this field.

To stimulate boys and girls in wanting to know more about the cooperative way of doing business, the Auxiliary has sponsored a 4-H Club contest annually since 1951. "What Cooperatives Have Done for My Community" and similar titles have served as subjects.

Most of the contests which the Auxiliary has helped to support have been conducted under 4-H Club and FFA auspices.

The manager estimated that 3,000 boys and girls hear about the cooperative's work each year through these activities. This fact alone has tremendous significance for the future.

In addition, many more women are having a chance to learn how their cooperative functions and serves farm people. These women, in turn, have many opportunities to speak a good word for the cooperative when attending meetings, buying groceries, and making other community contacts.

Other Publications Available

- Farmer Cooperatives in the United States. FCS Bulletin 1.
Cooperative Business Training for Farm Youth. FCS Circular 1. *Oscar R. LeBeau* and *John H. Heckman*.
Educational Practices of Farmer Cooperatives. General Report 8. *Oscar R. LeBeau*.
Better Living. FCS Educational Aid 3.
Farmer Cooperation—An American Way. Educational Aid 1, Sections A, B, C, D, E, F and G.
Farmer Cooperatives in Our Community. Circular E-32. *A. W. McKay*.
Guide for Teaching Farmer Cooperation. FCS Educational Circular 3. *John H. Heckman*.
Members Knowledge and Attitudes—Calavo Growers of California. Circular C-137. *A. W. McKay*.
Motion Picture Films Available on Cooperation. Information 2.
Organizing a Farmers' Cooperative. Circular C-108. *S. D. Sanders*.
Patrons Appraise Cooperative Relations. Circular C-140. *Oscar R. LeBeau* and *John H. Heckman*.
Selecting and Electing Directors of Farmers' Cooperatives. General Report 14. *Nelda Griffin, H. N. Weigandt, and K. B. Gardner*.
Sizing Up Your Cooperatives. FCS Educational Circular 11.
The Story of Farmer Cooperatives. FCS Educational Circular 1.
Three Principles of Agricultural Cooperation. Circular E-24. *Ward W. Fetrow*.
Using a Local Cooperative as Source Material for Teaching. Circular E-25. *Jas. L. Robinson*.

While a supply is available, a copy of these publications and others on farmer cooperatives may be obtained by writing

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